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Indoctrination and Group Evolutionary Strategies

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Indoctrination and Group Evolutionary Strategies

Indoctrination is a phenomenon that occurs within groups and, as a result, raises fundamental evolutionary questions regarding the relationship between the individual and the group. It has long been apparent to evolutionists that highly cohesive, altruistic groups would out-compete concatenations of individualists. The purpose of this essay will be to develop the idea of a group evolutionary strategy and to develop the idea that indoctrinability is an adaptation that facilitates the development of such groups. With few exceptions the data relevant to these theoretical interests will be drawn from historical and contemporary Jewish communities (see also MacDonald 1994).

For purposes of this essay, a group is defined as a discrete set of individuals that is identifiably separate from other individuals (who themselves may or may not be members of groups). Groups become interesting to an evolutionist when there are active attempts to segregate the group from the surrounding peoples, a situation that results in what Eibl-Eibesfeldt (1979, 122) terms "cultural pseudospeciation." Creating a group evolutionary strategy results in the possibility of cultural group selection resulting from between-group competition in which the groups are defined by culturally produced ingroup markings (Richerson and Boyd, 1995). Theoretically, group strategies are underdetermined and *unnecessary*. An group evolutionary strategy may be conceived as an "experiment in living" rather than the outcome of natural selection acting on human populations or the result of ecological contingencies acting on universal human genetic propensities.

In the case of Jews in traditional societies there was a wide range of actively-sought marks of separateness from surrounding peoples (MacDonald 1994). For example, among the factors facilitating separation of Jews and gentiles in traditional societies have included religious practice and beliefs, distinctive languages such as Yiddish, Hebrew, and Ladino, mannerisms (e.g., gestures), physical appearance (hair styles) and clothing, customs (especially the dietary laws), occupations that were dominated by the group, and living in physically separated areas that were administered by Jews according to Jewish civil and criminal law. All of these practices

can be found at very early stages of the diaspora, and in the ancient world there were a very large number of prohibitions that very directly limited social contacts between Jews and gentiles, such as the ban on drinking wine touched by Gentiles or the undesirability of bantering with gentiles on the day of a pagan festival in the Greco-Roman world of antiquity. Perhaps the most basic badges of group membership and separateness, appearing in the Pentateuch, are circumcision and the practice of the Sabbath.

Given this actively-sought separation, there is the possibility that there will be genetic differences between Jewish and gentile populations that are maintained over long stretches of historical time. There is considerable evidence for gene frequency differences between Jewish populations and populations they have lived among for centuries (e.g., Carmelli and Cavalli-Sforza 1979; Kobylianski et al 1982; see MacDonald 1994 for a review). Moreover, there is little doubt that over long stretches of historical time there was very little genetic admixture, due to the functioning of the segregative mechanisms described previously but also to very negative attitudes regarding intermarriage and proselytism (see MacDonald 1994).

A dispersed group that actively maintains genetic and cultural segregation from surrounding societies must develop methods to ensure social cohesion and prevent defection. Fundamental to Jewish group integrity over historical time have been social controls and ideologies that depend ultimately on human abilities to monitor and enforce group goals, to create ideological structures that rationalize group aims both to group members and to outsiders, and to indoctrinate group members to identify with the group and its aims.

Social controls on group members are central to group evolutionary strategies. Social controls can range from subtle effects of group pressure on modes of dressing to laws or social practices that result in large penalties to violators. Recently Robert Boyd and Peter Richerson (1992) have shown that punishment can result in the stability of altruism or any other group attribute. In the case of human groups, punishment that effectively promotes altruism and inhibits non-conformity to group goals can be effectively carried out as the result of culturally invented social controls on the behaviour of group members. Thus, while it may well be that group-level evolution is relatively uncommon among animals due to their limited abilities to prevent cheating, human groups are able to regulate themselves via social controls so that

theoretical possibilities regarding invasion by selfish types from surrounding human groups or from within can be eliminated or substantially reduced.

Facilitating altruism by punishing non-altruists can be viewed as a special case of the general principal that social controls can act to promote group interests that are in opposition to individual self-interest. Group strategies must typically defend themselves against "cheaters" who benefit from group membership but fail to conform to group goals. Human societies are able to institute a wide range of social controls that effectively channel individual behaviour, punish potential cheaters and defectors, and coerce individuals to be altruistic.

Besides social controls, group strategies also are typically characterized by elaborate ideological structures that rationalize group goals and behaviour within the group and to outgroup members. By far the most important form of such ideology in human history is what we term religion, and in the following it will be apparent that indoctrination into Judaism as a group evolutionary strategy involved the inculcation of religious beliefs that rationalized behaviour essential to the group strategy.

Indoctrination into the Group Ethic of Judaism

Judaism has been able to retain a very high level of group cohesion and within-group altruism over a very long period of historical time, at least partly because of social controls acting within the group that served to penalize non-altruists and non-cooperators, while cooperative altruists were ensured a high level of social prestige (MacDonald 1994). Nevertheless, social controls do not appear to be the whole story. If only social controls were involved, Judaism or any similar group evolutionary strategy, would be a sort of police-state in which the only motivations for socially prescribed behaviour would be fear of the negative consequences of non-compliance.

However, it is difficult to imagine that such a group would long endure, and, in any case, a very salient feature of historical Judaism has been the indoctrination of individuals into psychological acceptance of group aims. One area of psychological research relevant to conceptualizing the role of indoctrination in group evolutionary strategies such as traditional Judaism is that of research on individualism/collectivism (see Triandis 1990, 1991 for reviews).

Collectivist cultures (and Triandis [1990, 57] explicitly includes Judaism in this category) place a high emphasis on the goals and needs of the ingroup rather on individual rights and interests. Ingroup norms and the duty to cooperate and submerge individual goals to the needs of the group are paramount. Collectivist cultures develop an "unquestioned attachment" to the ingroup, including "the perception that ingroup norms are universally valid (a form of ethnocentrism), automatic obedience to ingroup authorities, and willingness to fight and die for the ingroup. These characteristics are usually associated with distrust of and unwillingness to cooperate with outgroups" (p. 55).

Socialization in collectivist cultures stresses group harmony, conformity, obedient submission to hierarchical authority, and honouring parents and elders. There is also a major stress on ingroup loyalty as well as trust and cooperation within the ingroup. Each of the ingroup members is viewed as responsible for every other member. However, relations with outgroup members tend to be "distant, distrustful, and even hostile" (Triandis 1991, 80). In collectivist cultures morality is conceptualized as that which benefits the group, and aggression and exploitation of outgroups are acceptable (Triandis 1990, 90).

As with all collectivist cultures (Triandis 1990; 1991), Judaism depends on inculcating a very powerful sense of group identification. Triandis (1989, 96) proposes that identification with an ingroup is increased under the following circumstances: membership is rewarding to the individual; ingroups are separated by signs of distinctiveness; there is a sense of common fate; socialization emphasizes ingroup membership; ingroup membership is small; the ingroup has distinctive norms and values. In addition, evolutionists (see Johnson [1986] and Salter [1995]) have emphasized that socialization for ingroup membership often includes an emphasis on the triggering of kin recognition mechanisms (such as references to the kinship nature of the group; e. g., "fatherland;" "the Jewish people") and phenotypic similarity (such as similar dress and mannerisms). Operant and classical conditioning are often used, as when individuals are publicly rewarded for group allegiance and altruism.

All of these mechanisms have undoubtedly been present within historical Jewish communities. I have noted the prevalence of external signs of separateness from gentiles among Jews in traditional societies, including language, clothing and mannerisms. In the present

context, these signs serve to enhance the phenotypic similarity of the ingroup and mark off a distinctive set of ingroup norms and values. Moreover, the goal of education in traditional societies was to promote the consciousness of separateness from outgroups and a sense of common fate among widely dispersed Jewish groups stretching forward and backward in historical time.

These trends can be seen clearly in historical Jewish communities as well as among contemporary Hasidic and Orthodox Jewish groups. Kamen (1985) notes that the Hasidim are very concerned about contamination from the secular culture and work very hard minimize the child's contact or even awareness of the wider culture. Similar to all Jewish societies prior to the Enlightenment, there are a great many markers of ingroup status, including speaking a Jewish language (in this case, Yiddish), distinctive modes of dress, and distinctive Jewish names (Kamen 1985, 43). A young Hasidic man commented that "I call my clothing a personal weapon because if I am tempted to do something which by law is not right, one look at myself, my hat, my coat, my tsitsis reminds me who I am. Nobody is there to see except me, and believe me that's enough" (in Kamen 1985, 88-89). The last part of the quote is particularly significant: This individual is clearly following the law not because of fear of negative sanctions by the community, but because he completely accepts the psychological desirability of doing so.

Education is of course extremely important, but a major goal in the Hasidic community is group enculturation rather than imparting subject matter (Mayer 1979). Television and other means of integrating with the wider culture are forbidden so that the child is simply not exposed to these influences. In addition, there are numerous holidays that are utilized in the school curriculum as a means of discussing particular events important in Jewish history or religious practice.

Particularly critical to Jewish indoctrination have been practices whereby, from a very early age, individuals are placed in situations where group activities involve very positive experiences of great emotional intensity. These experiences are perhaps analogous to the phenomenon of "love-bombing" as an aspect of indoctrination in religious cults (see Salter's contribution), except that this type of indoctrination begins at a very early age and continues throughout life. In the traditional shtetl communities of Eastern Europe, beginning at birth

children were socialized not simply as an individual or as a family member but as a member of the entire community. The child's birth was celebrated by the entire community and there were special roles for children in a variety of religious events. Thus at the Passover celebration, the youngest child asks the Passover questions, "quivering with excitement" (Zborowski and Herzog 1952, 387). The very elaborate ceremony functions to make the child very aware of the intimate connection of the child to the family and the family to the wider group of Jews extending backward in historical time. Another holiday, *Lag ba Omer*, is given over entirely to the pleasures of children, and a very prominent part of *Hanukkah* is when children go around to relatives to receive money. The boy's *Bar Mitzvah* is fundamentally a ceremony marking the child's new relationship to the group (Zborowski and Herzog 1952, 351).

Positive group experiences continue into adulthood. Among the Hasidim studied by Kamen (1985), group meetings and positively valenced social events are common. There are weekly meetings of the males (the *tish*) at which the children participate in group singing. After the singing, there is a discourse on the Torah, followed by singing and dancing. Group dancing by males is particularly striking and also occurs at weddings and other social events. The men join arms and dance together in an atmosphere of great joy and excitement—a clear indication of the powerful positive affective forces joining together members of the group. At the social events children are introduced in a very positive manner to group membership.

Synagogue services were also a very positive group experience in traditional Jewish society. Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 54) note the swaying and communal chanting as a prominent aspect of synagogue services in the traditional European shtetl communities:

The whole room is a swaying mass of black and white, filled with a tangle of murmur and low chantings, above which the vibrant voice of the cantor rises and falls, implores and exults, elaborating the traditional melodies with repetitions and modulations that are his own. The congregation prays as one, while within that unity each man as an individual speaks directly to God.

In addition to positive experiences that foster extremely positive attitudes toward the group, there are also negative sanctions on failure to conform to group goals. Conformity to group attitudes and behaviour are an extremely important aspect of social control in traditional

Jewish communities. "A sense of correct behaviour, Hasidishe behaviour, takes precedence over individual deviations. Indulgence in contrary behaviour is not tolerated by the group; the majority acts quickly to reprimand any member whose demeanor reflects negatively on his comrades" (Kamen 1985, 82-83).

Mayer (1979, 136ff; 141-142) also describes elaborate mechanisms of social control within the Orthodox community that spring into action to oppose any sign of non-conformity, such as a yarmulke that is too small or too brightly colored or a hem line that too high.

Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 226-227), writing of traditional European shtetl societies, also document elaborate mechanisms that ensure conformity within the community. People are extremely concerned about the good opinions of others. Everyone knows everything there is to know about everyone else, and withdrawal and secrecy are seen as intolerable.

Indoctrination also involves negatively valenced procedures akin to hazing as emphasized in Salter's presentation. After *Bar Mitzvah* and for approximately 7 years until marriage, the boys spend 16 hours per day with their peer group, including communal breakfast, communal ritual baths, communal studying and prayer. At this age, studying itself is done with a great deal of emotion. Accounts indicate considerable sleep deprivation and a great deal of pressure to perform well within the peer group. The boys/men of this age are expected to relate primarily to the peer group, and if a child spends too much time at home his behaviour reflects poorly on himself and his family.

Efforts to socialize children and adults to the group are also apparent in much less traditional Jewish groups. Judaism in contemporary American society is best viewed as a civil religion (Woocher 1986), and, perhaps because of the lessening prevalence of many of the traditional segregating mechanisms that have facilitated group cohesion over the centuries, the civil religion goes to great lengths to prevent group defection, especially by attempting to strengthen Jewish education. Those who do defect are simply written off, and group continuity and integrity are maintained by a central core of highly committed individuals. Because of the assimilatory pressures from the surrounding society, great importance is placed on "the recognition of Jewish education as the most vital element in the preservation of the Jewish people" (Woocher 1986, 34; see also Elazar, 1980, 211).

Jewish identification is actively facilitated by encouraging trips to Israel by high school and college students, and, indeed, Elazar terms Israel "the central focus of American Jewish educational effort" (p. 291). Woocher (1986, 150) notes that the trips to Israel are often overlaid with "mythic" overtones from Jewish history (p. 150) (e.g., visits to holocaust memorials), and have as their goal increased commitment to a Jewish identification on the part of the visitors. The retreats function as a sort of religious experience that attempts to effect attitude change by removing participants from their normal lives, by emphasizing group-oriented activities and a sense of community, nostalgia and "specialness", and by renewing commitment to group identification and group goals (pp. 151-52).

Social Identity Consequences of Indoctrination

As a prelude to developing an evolutionary theory of indoctrinability, I will first consider the expected consequences of the indoctrination practices described above in terms of social identity theory (see Hogg and Abrams 1987 for a review). Social identity theory proposes that individuals engage in a process whereby they place themselves and others in social categories. Clearly a major effect of the indoctrination procedures described above is to highlight the salience of ingroup membership to those being indoctrinated. From the standpoint of social identity theory, there are several important consequences of this process:

- 1.) The social categorization process results in discontinuities such that individuals exaggerate the similarities of individuals within each category (the *accentuation* effect). Thus, there is a psychological basis for supposing that, given the highly salient cultural separatism characteristic of Judaism, both Jews and gentiles would sort others into the category "Jew" or "gentile" and would exaggerate the similarity of members within each category. By this mechanism, people re-conceptualize continuous distributions as sharply discontinuous, and the effect is particularly strong if the dimension is of importance to the categorizer. In the case of intergroup conflict, the dimensions are in fact likely to be imbued with great subjective importance

Moreover, the individual also places himself/herself into one of the categories (an ingroup), with the result that similarities between self and ingroup are exaggerated and

dissimilarities with outgroup members are exaggerated. An important result of this self-categorization process is that individuals adopt behaviour and beliefs congruent with the stereotype of the ingroup.

2.) Social identity research indicates that the stereotypic behaviour and attitudes of the ingroup are positively valued, while outgroup behaviour and attitudes are negatively valued. Thus the homogenization of the behaviour of ingroups and outgroups has strong affective overtones, and individuals develop favorable attitudes toward ingroup members and unfavorable attitudes toward outgroup members. Ingroup and outgroup members are both expected to develop highly negative attitudes regarding the behaviour of members of the other group and to generally fail to attend to individual variation among members of the other group. The ingroup develops a *positive distinctness*, a *positive social identity*, and increased self-esteem as a result of this process. Within the group there is a great deal of cohesiveness, positive affective regard, and camaraderie, while relationships outside the group can be hostile and distrustful.

Social identity theorists propose that the primary affective mechanism involved in social identity processes is self-esteem, and that indeed, the need to achieve a positive self-evaluation via this social categorization process functions as a theoretical primitive. Individuals maximize the difference between ingroup and outgroup in a manner that accentuate the positive characteristics of the ingroup. They do so precisely because of this (theoretically) primitive need to categorize themselves as a member of a group with characteristics they reflect well on the group as a whole and therefore on them individually. For example, Gitelman (1990, 8), describing Jewish identity processes in the Soviet Union, noted that Jews developed a great curiosity about Jewish history "not merely from a thirst for historical knowledge, but from a need to locate oneself within a group, its achievements, and its fate. It is as if the individual's own status, at least in his own eyes, will be defined by the accomplishments of others who carry the same label. 'If Einstein was a Jew, and I am a Jew, it does not quite follow that I am an Einstein, but . . .'"

Further, people very easily adopt negative stereotypes about outgroups and these stereotypes possess a great deal of inertia (i.e., they are slow to change and are resistant to countervailing examples). Resistance to change is especially robust if the category is one that is

important to the positive evaluation of the ingroup or the negative evaluation of the outgroup. It would be expected that people would be more likely to change their categorization of the hair color of outgroup members on the basis of counter-examples of a stereotype than they would change their categorization of outgroup members as stupid or lazy or dishonest.

The result of these categorization processes is group behaviour that involves discrimination against the outgroup and in favor of the ingroup; beliefs in the superiority of the ingroup and inferiority of the outgroup; and positive affective preference for the ingroup and negative affect directed toward the outgroup. Although groups may be originally dichotomized on only one dimension (e.g., Jew/gentile), there is a tendency to expand the number of dimensions on which the individuals in the groups are categorized and to do so in an evaluative manner.

Thus a Jew would be expected to not only sharply distinguish between Jews and gentiles, but come to view gentiles as characterized by a number of negative traits (e.g., stupidity, drunkenness), while Jews would be viewed as characterized by corresponding positive traits (e.g., intelligence, sobriety).

A series of contrasts is set up in the mind of the shtetl child, who grows up to regard certain behavior as characteristic of Jews, and its opposite as characteristic of Gentiles. Among Jews he expects to find emphasis on intellect, a sense of moderation, cherishing of spiritual values, cultivation of rational, goal-directed activities, a "beautiful" family life. Among Gentiles he looks for the opposite of each item: emphasis on the body, excess, blind instinct, sexual license, and ruthless force. The first list is ticketed in his mind as Jewish, the second as goyish. (Zborowski and Herzog 1952, 152)

As expected, Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 152) find that this world view was then confirmed by examples of gentile behaviour that conformed to the stereotype, as when gentiles suddenly rose up and engaged in a murderous pogrom against the Jews. There was also a clear sense that the attributes of the ingroup are superior qualities, and those of the outgroup are inferior. Jews valued highly the attributes that they considered themselves high on and viewed the characteristics of the gentiles in a very negative manner. There was a general air of

superiority to gentiles. Jews returning from Sabbath services "pity the barefoot goyim, deprived of the Covenant, the Law, and the joy of Sabbath . . . 'We thought they were very unfortunate. They had no enjoyment . . . no Sabbath . . . no holidays . . . no fun . . . ' 'They'd drink a lot and you couldn't blame them, their lives were so miserable'."

The negative attitudes were fully reciprocated. Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 157) note that both Jews and gentiles referred to the other with imagery of specific animals, implying that the other was subhuman. When a member of the other group dies, the word used is the word for the death of an animal. Each would say of one's own group that they "eat," while members of the other group "gobble." "The peasant will say, 'That's not a man, it's a Jew.' And the Jew will say, 'That's not a man, it's a goy.'" (Zborowski and Herzog 1952, 157).

There was thus a powerful tendency toward reciprocity of negative attitudes and stereotypes. Stories about the other group would recount instances of deception (p. 157), and everyday transactions would be carried on with a subtext of mutual suspicion. "There is beyond this surface dealing, however, an underlying sense of difference and danger. Secretly each [Jewish merchant and gentile peasant] feels superior to the other, the Jew in intellect and spirit, the 'goy' in physical force—his own and that of his group. By the same token each feels at a disadvantage opposite the other, the peasant uneasy at the intellectuality he attributes to the Jew, the Jew oppressed by the physical power he attributes to the goy" (Zborowski and Herzog 1952, 67).

An Evolutionary Interpretation of Social Identity Processes and Collectivism

The empirical results of social identity research are highly compatible with an evolutionary basis for group behaviour. Vine (1987) notes that the evidence supports the universality of the tendency to view one's own group as superior. Moreover, social identity processes occur very early in life, prior to explicit knowledge about the outgroup (Hogg and Abrams 1987). An evolutionary interpretation of these findings is also supported by results indicating that social identity processes occur among advanced animal species such as chimpanzees. Van der Dennen (1991, 237) proposes, on the basis of his review of the literature on human and animal conflict, that advanced species have "extra-strong group delimitations"

based on affective mechanisms. Among humans one affective mechanism may well be the self-esteem mechanism central to social identity theory. Another positive emotion revealed by research on religious cults is the profound sense of relief that individuals experience when they join these highly collectivist, authoritarian groups (see Galanter 1989a). However, successful socialization into a highly cohesive group would also be expected to lead to feelings of guilt at the possibility of failure to conform to group goals. These latter mechanisms, although not considered by social identity theorists, would result in strong positive feelings associated with group membership and feelings of guilt and distress at the prospect of defecting from the group.

The powerful affective components involved in social identity processes are very difficult to explain except as an aspect of the evolved machinery of the human mind. I have noted the powerful tendency to seek self-esteem via social identity processes as a theoretical primitive in the system. As Hogg and Abrams (1987, 73) note, this result cannot be explained in terms of purely cognitive processes, and a learning theory seems hopelessly *ad hoc* and gratuitous. The tendencies for humans to place themselves in social categories and for these categories to assume immense affective and evaluative overtones involving the emotions of self-esteem, relief, distress, and guilt are the best candidates for the biological underpinnings of participation in highly cohesive collectivist groups.

Moreover, the fact that social identity processes and tendencies toward collectivism increase during times of resource competition and threat to the group (see Hogg and Abrams 1987; Triandis 1990; 1991) is highly compatible with supposing that these processes involve facultative mechanisms that emerged as a result of selection at the level of the group. As emphasized by evolutionists such as Alexander (1979) and Johnson (1995), external threat tends to reduce internal divisions and maximize perceptions of common interest among group members. This perspective is compatible with Wilson and Sober's (1994) proposal of group-selected psychological mechanisms that facilitate group goals on a facultative basis, i.e., in response to specific contingencies. Under conditions of external threat, there is an increase in cooperative and even altruistic behaviour. I propose that external threat is a situation that elicits an evolved facultative tendency to more strongly identify with the group and to submerge individual interests to group interests. (As Wilson and Sober [1994] emphasize, such

mechanisms do not imply conflict between individual and group goals: Individuals engaging in altruistic or other types of group-oriented behaviour may continue to monitor their individual self-interest. The only point is that the group becomes the unit of selection.)

This perspective implies that the awareness of anti-Semitism would tend to foster a sense of group identity and social cohesion in the face of threat—the "common fate" or "shared enemy" syndrome studied by psychologists (Berkowitz 1982; Hogg and Abrams 1987). Feldman (1993, 43) finds very robust tendencies toward heightened Jewish identification and rejection of gentile culture consequent to anti-Semitism at the very beginnings of Judaism in the ancient world and throughout Jewish history. Historically anti-Semitism and the perception of anti-Semitism have been potent tools for rallying group commitment and for legitimizing the continuity of Judaism (e.g., Hertzberg 1995; Schorsch 1972, 121, 207-208; Woocher 1986, 46).

A permanent sense of imminent threat appears to be common among Jews, and, as indicated above, such a threat would be expected to enhance commitment to the group. Writing on the clinical profile of Jewish families, Herz and Rosen (1982) note that for Jewish families a "sense of persecution (or its imminence) is part of a cultural heritage and is usually assumed with pride. Suffering is even a form of sharing with one's fellow-Jews. It binds Jews with their heritage—with the suffering of Jews throughout history"—a comment that also indicates once again the importance of a sense of common fate and historical continuity to Jewish identification. Zborowski and Herzog (1952, 153) note that the homes of wealthy Jews in traditional Eastern European shtetl communities often had secret passages for use in times of anti-Semitic pogroms, and that their existence was "part of the imagery of the children who played around them, just as the half-effaced memory was part of every Jew's mental equipment."

This evolved response to external threat is often manipulated by authorities attempting to inculcate a stronger sense of group identification. Thus Heller (1988, 135) notes that a prominent feature of Soviet propaganda throughout its history was the inculcation of the belief that the Soviet Union was a "besieged fortress." "In a besieged fortress it is essential to fear and to hate the external enemy, who has surrounded the stronghold, is undermining the walls and threatening your 'home' and your life."

The inculcation of a siege mentality also appears to be an aspect of contemporary Judaism. Within this world view, the gentile world is conceptualized as fundamentally hostile, with Jewish life always on the verge of ceasing to exist entirely. "Like many other generations of Jews who have felt similarly, the leaders of the polity who fear that the end may be near have transformed this concern into a survivalist weapon" (Woocher 1986, 73). Thus, for example, Woocher notes that there has been a major effort since the 1960s to have American Jews visit Israel in an effort to strengthen Jewish identification, with a prominent aspect of the visit being a trip to a border outpost "where the ongoing threat to Israel's security is palpable" (p. 150).

Indeed, Jewish religious consciousness centers to a remarkable extent around the memory of persecution, including the holidays of Passover, Hanukkah, Purim, and Yom Kippur. Lipset and Raab (1995, 108) note that Jews learn about the Middle Ages as a period of persecution in Christian Europe, culminating in the expulsions and the Inquisitions. There is also a strong awareness of the persecutions in Eastern Europe, including especially the Czarist persecutions. And recently, the holocaust has assumed a pre-eminent role in Jewish self-conceptualization (Hertzberg 1995; Wolffsohn 1993, 77ff).

Given the importance of external threat in cementing group ties, complete acceptance by the gentile community may be viewed negatively or at least with ambivalence by those interested in maintaining group cohesion: One hears quite often of Jewish leaders in contemporary America expressing concern about being "loved to death", since complete acceptance may lead to intermarriage and a loss of Jewish identity (see, e.g., Eliot A. Cohen 1992, 141; Lipset and Raab 1995, 75). Perhaps as a result, American Jews tend to overestimate the actual amount of anti-Semitism. For example, Lipset and Raab (1995, 75) describe survey results from 1985 indicating that one-third of a sample of affiliated Jews in the San Francisco area stated that a Jew could not be elected to Congress at a time when three of the four congressional representatives from the area were "well-identified" Jews, as were the two state senators and the mayor of San Francisco. Survey results from 1990 indicated eight out of 10 American Jews had serious concerns about anti-Semitism, and significant percentages believed anti-Semitism was growing even though there was no evidence for this, while at the same time 90% of gentiles viewed anti-Semitism as residual and vanishing (Hertzberg 1995, 337).

Also compatible with the proposal that individuals are more prone to submerge themselves in cohesive groups during times of external threat, there is evidence that the collectivist tendencies of Jewish communities became even more pronounced during periods of group conflict. For example, as was typical of traditional Jewish communities, there was an extreme level of conformity and thought control among Jews in the Ottoman empire in the early modern period (Shaw 1991, 137ff). The community very precisely regulated every aspect of life, including the shape and length of beards, all aspects of dress in public and private, the amount of charity required of members, numbers of people at social gatherings, the appearance of graves and gravestones, precise behaviour on Sabbath, the precise form of conversations, the order of precedence at all social gatherings, etc. The rules were enforced "with a kind of police surveillance," and failure to abide by the rules could result in imprisonment in community prisons, or, at the extreme, in excommunication. Although these practices occurred during a period of economic prosperity, these hyper-conformist tendencies became even more extreme during a subsequent period of persecution and economic decline.

While the above presents a static picture of the mechanisms related to group commitment, there may also be selection within the Jewish community over historical time for traits related to social identity and collectivism. As conceptualized by Triandis, individualism/collectivism is an individual differences dimension, and it would appear that there are quite a few cases of individuals who are extreme on such a dimension to the point where defecting from the group is not an option. Especially striking has been the phenomenon of individuals who readily undergo martyrdom or mass suicide rather than abandon the group. We see examples periodically in modern times (such as the Jonestown massacre), and there are many historical examples, ranging from Christian martyrs in ancient times to a great many instances of Jewish martyrs over a 2000 year period.

Recently there has developed a fairly large literature on religious cults with characteristics that illustrate the importance of social identity processes and clearly place them on the extreme collectivist end of the individualism/collectivism dimension. These charismatic groups are highly cohesive, collectivist, and authoritarian (e.g., Galanter 1989a,b; Levine 1989; Deutsch 1989). Within the group there is a great deal of harmony and positive regard for group

members combined with negative perceptions of outsiders. Psychological well-being increases when the person joins the group, and individuals experiencing dis-affiliation experience psychological distress. .

This affective motivation may be increased by personal feelings of threat prior to joining the cult. Many individuals who join cults are not satisfied with their lives and feel personally threatened (Clark, Langone, Schechter, and Daly 1981)—a finding that I interpret as resulting from the triggering of collectivist mechanisms in a facultative manner as a response to external threat or simply feelings of "not doing well" in life. Indeed, Galanter found that the individuals who experienced the greatest relief upon joining cults were those who were most distressed prior to joining, and case study material indicates that many of these individuals were experiencing economic, social, and/or psychological stresses (e.g., change of residence, being fired from a job, illness of relatives [1989a, 92]). Sirkin and Grelong (1988) found similar associations in their sample of cult members from Jewish families.

Jewish martyrdom and the extreme intensity of Jewish group commitment have long been apparent to historians. Johnson (1987; p. 3) calls the Jews "the most tenacious people in history", but even this judgment seems inadequate. Jewish groups have persisted for centuries even though they have been isolated from other Jewish groups and subjected to persecutions, and even under circumstances where they were forced to engage in crypsis for many generations (see MacDonald 1994, ch. 8).

The suggestion is that among Jews there is a significant critical mass for whom desertion of the group is not an option no matter what the consequences to the individual. Consider, for example, the behaviour of groups of Ashkenazi Jews in response to demands made to convert during the disturbances surrounding the First Crusade in Germany in 1096. Jewish behaviour in this instance was truly remarkable. When given the choice of conversion or death, a contemporary Jewish chronicler noted that Jews "stretched forth their necks, so that their heads might be cut off in the Name of their Creator. . . . Indeed fathers also fell with their children, for they were slaughtered together. They slaughtered brethren, relatives, wives, and children. Bridegrooms [slaughtered] their intended and merciful mothers their only children" (in Chazan 1987, 245).

It is very difficult to suppose that such people have an algorithm that calculates individual fitness payoffs by balancing the tendency to desert the group with anticipated benefits of continued group membership. The obvious interpretation of such a phenomenon is that these people are obligated to remain in the group no matter what; i.e., there are no conceivable circumstances that would cause such people to abandon the group, go their own way, and become assimilated to the outgroup. As indicated above, selection at the level of the group need not imply that organisms do not attend to the individual costs of group membership. Nevertheless, the suggestion here is that many extremely committed members of highly cohesive groups do not in fact have an algorithm that assesses the individual costs and benefits of group membership. Via indoctrination and/or selection processes for genes that predispose individuals to such behaviour, it appears to be possible to produce extreme self-sacrifice in human groups.

While I do not suppose that such an extreme level of self-sacrifice is a pan-human psychological adaptation, it may well be the case that a significant proportion of Jews are extremely attracted to group membership to the point that they do not calculate individual payoffs of group membership. The proposed model is that over historical time average group standing on the trait of collectivism has increased among Jews because individuals low on this trait (in this case, individuals who do not conform to expected standards of group behaviour) are more likely to voluntarily defect from the group or be forcibly excluded from the group.

It has often been observed among historians of Judaism that the most committed members of the group have determined the direction of the group (e.g., Sacks 1993, ix-x), and such individuals are likely to receive a disproportionate amount of the rewards of group membership. Moreover, Jordan (1989, 138) notes that Jews who defected during the Middle Ages (and sometimes persecuted their former co-religionists) tended to be people who were "unable to sustain the demands of [the] elders for conformity." (The Sephardic philosopher Baruch Spinoza is a famous example of a non-conformist who was expelled from the Jewish community.) This trend may well have accelerated since the Enlightenment because the costs of defection became lower. Israel (1985, 254) notes that after the Enlightenment defections from Judaism due ultimately to negative attitudes regarding the restrictive Jewish community life were common enough to have a negative demographic effect on the Jewish community.

Moreover, in traditional societies there was discrimination within the Jewish community such that the families of individuals who had apostatized or engaged in other major breaches of approved behaviour had lessened prospects for marriage. Writing of 13th-century Spain, Baer (1961) notes that measures were taken to protect converts to Christianity from abuse by their former co-religionists. The interesting thing is that conversion was "a blot on the family. The disgrace of one convert in a family was enough cause to warrant the disruption of the wedding engagement of an innocent relative. His former brethren regarded him as a renegade and ostracized him" (Neuman 1969 II, 190).

This type of social control in which relatives were penalized by individual behaviour in contravention of group norms was common throughout Jewish history. Goitein (1978, 33, 45), writing of Medieval Islamic times, notes that the responsibility of the extended family was recognized by public opinion although it was not a formal part of Jewish law. Hundert (1992; see also Katz 1961) notes that in traditional Ashkenazi society the son of a convert was ostracized and ridiculed because of his father's apostasy, indicating that conversion had negative effects on the entire family even beyond the immediate generation. And Deshen (1986) describes a 19th century Moroccan case in which a man was allowed to break an engagement with a woman whose aunt had given birth out of wedlock. The decision was based on a precedent in which a man was allowed to break an engagement with a woman whose sister had converted to Islam. To the extent that there is heritable variation for such non-conformity (and all personality traits are heritable [e.g., Digman 1990]), such practices imply that there will be strong selection pressures concentrating genes for group loyalty and social conformity within the Jewish gene pool.

There has probably always been cultural selection such that people who have difficulty submerging their interests to those of the group have been disproportionately likely to defect from Judaism. Such individuals would have chaffed at the myriad regulations that governed every aspect of life in traditional Jewish society. In Triandis' (1990, 55; see Chapter 8) terms, these individuals are "idiocentric" people living in a collectivist culture; i.e., they are people who are less group oriented and less willing to put group interests above their own.

It is likely therefore that there has been within-group selection for genes predisposing people to be extremely inclined to collectivism to the point that they are simply incapable of

calculating individual payoffs of group membership. This hypothesis is highly compatible with the finding that Jews have been overrepresented among non-Jewish religious cults (Marciano 1981; Schwartz 1978). Galanter (1989a, 23) finds that 21% Divine Light commune, organized by Maharaj Ji, were Jewish despite the fact that Jews represented only 2% of the U. S. population. Moreover, 8% of Galanter's sample of members of the Unification Church of Reverend Sun Myung Moon were Jewish (p. 131). This finding is compatible with the proposal that Jews have a stronger tendency toward collectivism in general (see also MacDonald 1994, Ch. 8). In addition, a very large percentage of Jews are involved in specifically Jewish groups (including, I would suppose, the *haredim*, Orthodox Jews and Conservative Jews in the contemporary world) characterized by many of the features (cohesion, collectivism, and authoritarianism) ascribed to religious cults. In traditional societies, of course, all Jews were Orthodox.

It is interesting in this regard that highly committed Jews appear to seek out relatively small synagogues of relative ethnic homogeneity where there is a deep sense of group identification. The main purpose of these smaller synagogues seems to be to satisfy the need for very close feelings of group identification—what Mayer (1979, 110) terms a "we-feeling" of shared intimacy in a group. Mayer describes a trend whereby those trained in Orthodox *yeshivas* seek out an Hasidic synagogue as adults because of their greater feelings of group intimacy.

Further, Sirkin and Grellong (1988) found that cult members from Jewish families had a higher number of highly religious relatives than contrast Jewish families. This occurred despite the fact that the contrast Jewish families were actually more religiously observant than the families of cult members. These findings are highly compatible with the hypothesis that cult membership is influenced by genetic variation: Jewish cult members come disproportionately from relatively unobservant families who nevertheless have a strong familial predisposition toward membership in highly collectivist groups. The relative lack of religious observance among these cult-involved families may have resulted from their greater tendency toward intellectual, cultural, and political activities that were seen as incompatible with traditional religious observance. However, these cultural activities failed to provide the psychological sense of intense group involvement desired by the children, with the result that the children were prone to joining religious cults.

Conclusion

A clear message of the foregoing is that indoctrinability is a critical human adaptation that enables the formation of highly cohesive groups. Group strategies are very powerful in competition with individual strategies within a society, and especially so in the case of Judaism. The power of the Jewish group strategy has derived from the following: 1.) Judaism has been characterized by cultural and eugenic practices that produced a highly talented and educated elite that was able to improve the fortunes of the entire group; 2.) universal Jewish education resulted in an average resource acquisition ability of the entire group was above that of the rest of the society; and 3.) there were high levels of within-group altruism and cooperation (see MacDonald 1994).

Given the presence of a very powerful group strategy within a society, there is the expectation that dynamic processes will develop between the strategizing group and the rest of the population. In particular, as a group strategy such as Judaism comes to be increasingly salient and powerful within a society, outgroup members are expected to be increasingly likely to join highly cohesive groups in an effort to further their own interests. The theory and data discussed in this paper therefore not only provide a perspective on evolutionary strategies such as Judaism, but also provide a tool for understanding the development of antithetical group strategies, as represented historically by anti-Semitic movements (MacDonald, in press): External threat results in a higher sense of group cohesion among Jews, but the same processes occurring among gentiles imply that gentiles would be increasingly likely to join cohesive, relatively altruistic groups when they perceive themselves as engaged in resource competition and threatened by a highly cohesive group. From the perspective of gentiles, the social identity processes summarized above imply that the presence of a cohesive, distinctive outgroup (i.e., the Jews) would result in a heightened salience of ingroup (i.e., gentile) identification and corresponding devaluation of the outgroup. In situations of external threat, group members close ranks and there is an increase in cohesiveness, solidarity, and the acceptance of collectivist rather than individualist social norms. Negative stereotypes regarding the outgroup are developed, and there

are cognitive biases such that negative information about the outgroup is preferentially attended to and points of disagreement highlighted.

The suggestion is that in the long run highly successful group strategies spawn mirror images of themselves as non-group members increasingly perceive a need to organize against the group strategy. The result is a fascinating historical dynamic in which the individualistic tendencies of prototypical Western societies have been punctuated in critical historical eras by the development of highly collectivist Western societies with powerful overtones of anti-Semitism (late Roman and medieval Western Christianity, Naziism). However, these issues lead well beyond the present paper (see MacDonald, in press).

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